

# FISCAL NOTE

**Bill #:** HB0438

**Title:** Braille literacy services for blind or visually impaired children

**Primary Sponsor:** Buzzas, R

**Status:** As Amended in House Committee

Sponsor signature

Date

David Ewer, Budget Director

Date

## Fiscal Summary

	<b><u>FY 2006 Difference</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2007 Difference</u></b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
General Fund	\$244,273	\$195,731
<b>Revenue:</b>		
General Fund	\$0	\$0
<b>Net Impact on General Fund Balance:</b>	(\$244,273)	(\$195,731)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Local Gov. Impact    | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Concerns                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Included in the Executive Budget | <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Long-Term Impacts           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated Revenue Form Attached  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Needs to be included in HB 2 |

## Fiscal Analysis

### ASSUMPTIONS:

#### **Office of Public Instruction (OPI)**

1. An appropriation in section 8 to the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB) will employ two outreach workers with skills in teaching children with a visual impairment and will also employ two Braille specialists. All four personnel will work approximately nine and one half month contracts.
2. The equipment loan program in section 5 will provide schools with necessary Braille equipment on a short-term loan basis only. Schools will continue to purchase their own equipment consistent with equipment needs specified in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
3. Section 7 provides appropriate materials to each blind and visually impaired child and is already required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Providing these materials consistent with language in section 7 will be no greater than what is already required of schools under the IDEA

#### **Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB)**

1. Currently 154 visually impaired students are being served by three Outreach Consultants from the MSDB. These students are served in their local school district. Seventeen of these students are receiving Braille and four are receiving pre-Braille instruction for a total of 21. To provide local school districts with the level of service necessary to ensure that the education program for each visually impaired child is in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, additional content experts from MSDB must

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be available to assist with Braille/learning media assessment, and IEP/program planning. MSDB will provide content experts to districts needing technical assistance necessary for staff to develop competency with Braille instruction and the use of equipment and software related to Braille instruction. To accomplish these tasks necessitates that MSDB hire four (4) additional Outreach Consultants (3.08 FTE). Operating costs for these consultants is as follows:

Travel per diem	\$10,340 per year
Supplies	\$3,000 per year
Lease Vehicles (3)	\$17,975 per year
Office Equipment *	<u>\$20,000</u> first year
	\$51,315

\*Office equipment is for FY 2006 only

2. Districts with newly enrolled or identified visually impaired students who require Braille instruction do not typically have the equipment necessary to provide this service. HB 438 requires MSDB to establish an equipment loan program for school districts. A selection of the most common Braille training and production equipment used for instruction would be available through the loan program to districts on a temporary basis. This allows schools to implement IEP mandated services on a timely basis. All equipment will be budgeted for a replacement cycle of 3 years. Braille equipment purchased in FY 2006 includes:

Braille Embossers	
2 - (heavy duty - Romeo)	\$10,000
2 - (light duty – Braille Blazer)	\$3,400
Braille note takers	
4 - Braille N' Speak	\$5,200
2 - Braille Lite	\$9,000
2 - Braille Note	\$9,000
5 - Software (Openbook/Jaws)	<u>\$6,000</u>
	\$42,600

**FISCAL IMPACT:****Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB)**

	FY 2006 <u>Difference</u>	FY 2007 <u>Difference</u>
FTE	3.08	3.08

**Expenditures:**

Personal Services	\$150,358	\$150,358
Operating Expenses	\$51,315	\$31,315
Equipment- Loan Program	<u>\$42,600</u>	<u>\$14,058</u>
TOTAL	\$244,273	\$195,731

**Funding of Expenditures:**

General Fund (01)	\$244,273	\$195,731
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**Net Impact to Fund Balance (Revenue minus Funding of Expenditures):**

General Fund (01)	(\$244,273)	(\$195,731)
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**EFFECT ON COUNTY OR OTHER LOCAL REVENUES OR EXPENDITURES:****Office of Public Instruction (OPI)**

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1. In section 6 additional training and recruitment costs for local school districts, if any, are unknown and will depend on the standards for training and supervision to be adopted by the Board of Public Education. It is likely that two additional Braille specialists to be employed by the MSDB will support this training effort and mitigate some of the potential cost.
2. The addition of MSDB outreach workers for children with visual impairments will provide additional expertise to the special education evaluation and program planning process in local school districts. This could result in an expansion of the provision of instruction in Braille to more students, and could result in a more concentrated provision of Braille instruction for students already receiving instruction in Braille. Additional costs to local districts, if any, are unknown.